

Clarification regarding press reports on President Juncker comments on a European unemployment insurance

The European Commission would like to respond to various media reports claiming that President Juncker is “asking for” a European unemployment insurance. This is a distortion of the message conveyed by President Juncker and based on cutting short the full answer he gave to this question in an interview with “Welt am Sonntag” – which is available in full length in [English](#). President Juncker is not asking for a new financial instrument. In fact, the European Commission in its proposal for the multiannual financial framework has already proposed a shock-absorption mechanism to cope with asymmetrical, external shocks – this can also include a re-insurance for national unemployment insurance schemes.

Full verbatim of the question and answer:

WELT AM SONNTAG: In southern Europe in particular, however, many people are demanding that the EU become more social. Would a European unemployment insurance scheme, for example, be a good idea

Juncker: Even though I am very much in favour of a European unemployment insurance, this must not be a ‘carte blanche’ for countries that do not carry out reforms and find themselves in difficulties as a result. In our proposal for the medium-term financial planning, the Commission put forward two instruments: 25 billion euro for a reform support programme and 30 billion euro for a stabilisation function, a shock-absorption mechanism to cope with asymmetrical, external shocks – this can also include a re-insurance for national unemployment insurance schemes. This instrument could help to mitigate sudden economic crises in a particular country caused by external developments, and thus provide re-insurance at European level for national insurance systems. It is not right that a particular EU country has to reduce unemployment benefits because of rising jobless numbers in a crisis that is not of its making. It is important not to respond to crises with the wrong type of spending cuts, lowering investments, education spending and unemployment benefits.

Main topics and media events 7 – 20

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ESMA updates its Q&As on MiFID II and MiFIR commodity derivatives topics

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has today updated its [Questions and Answers](#) on MiFID II and MiFIR commodity derivatives topics. These Q&As provide clarification on issues related to the MiFID II/MiFIR regime for commodity derivatives, including on position limits, position reporting and ancillary activity.

The new answer is provided on the following topic:

- ESMA clarifies the correct application of the field “price multiplier” when reporting electricity contracts, in order to mitigate the risk of different contracts receiving the same ISIN.

The purpose of these Q&As is to promote common supervisory approaches and practices in the application of MiFID II and MiFIR. They provide responses to questions raised by market participants in relation to the practical application of the level 1 and level 2 provisions relating to commodity derivative issues.

ESMA will continue to develop these Q&As in the coming months and will review and update them where required.

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2019 European Capitals of Culture: Plovdiv and Matera

As of 1 January 2019, [Plovdiv](#) (Bulgaria) and [Matera](#) (Italy) will hold the title of European Capital of Culture for one year. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *“The programmes for Plovdiv and Matera show how these cities envisage both their own future and that of Europe, whilst celebrating their extraordinary centuries-old heritage. The European Capital of Culture initiative brings people together and highlights the role of culture in building a European identity. Both cities will help ensure a long-term impact of last year’s successful European Year of Cultural Heritage, which has demonstrated how culture can transform our cities and regions for the better. I wish Plovdiv and Matera every success in the coming year.”* Plovdiv is the first ever Bulgarian city to be chosen as European Capital of Culture. With a full programme under the motto “Together”, 2019 will bring new opportunities to the region and international visibility for the city. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society will attend the official opening ceremony on 12 January. The programme for Matera has been organised under the motto “Open Future”, and will have a special focus on social and cultural inclusion and collaborative innovation. Commissioner **Navracsics** will attend the official opening ceremony on 19 January. The full press release is online [here](#). A [factsheet](#) and a [brochure](#) on the European Capitals of Culture are available online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

President Juncker sends his condolences to Denmark Prime Minister after train accident

Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** sent yesterday his condolences via a letter to Denmark Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen after eight persons died and 16 were wounded in a train accident on the bridge between Zealand and Funen. President **Juncker** said: *“On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims and the Danish people. Lives were sadly cut short at the moment when the passengers were travelling back from the most festive season of the year. I commend your rescue services for their work, and wish for a speedy recovery of the injured passengers.”* (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382)

The Juncker Plan supports the rural economy in Spain

On 27 December 2018, the Investment Plan for Europe – the Juncker Plan – backed part of a €610 million European Investment Bank (EIB) Group guarantee to Spanish bank Cajamar. The guarantee provides better access to finance for

small businesses and entrepreneurs in Spain's rural areas and enables more investments in agri-food projects. Some 15,000 rural businesses are set to benefit from this agreement. Commissioner Phil **Hogan**, responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development, said: "With €46 billion of additional investment mobilised in Spain, the Juncker Plan is already a success story in the country. This new agreement will bring EU support to small and medium businesses and entrepreneurs in rural areas, where a helping hand is much needed. The rural economy is a green goldmine and I'm glad that the Juncker Plan helps fulfil its potential." A press release is available [here](#). As of December 2018, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) at the heart of the Juncker Plan had already mobilised €371.2 billion of investment across Europe, including €46 billion in Spain. (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de CIT par Bolloré et APMT

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de Côte d'Ivoire Terminal ("CIT"), basée en Côte d'Ivoire, par Bolloré Africa Logistics, appartenant au groupe Bolloré, toutes deux basées en France, et APM Terminals BV ("APMT"), basée aux Pays-Bas, une filiale en propriété exclusive d'A.P. Møller-Mærsk A/S, basée au Danemark. CIT est actuellement sous le contrôle exclusif d'APMT. CIT est active dans la construction et l'exploitation d'un nouveau terminal à conteneurs en eau profonde dans le port d'Abidjan, en Côte d'Ivoire, destiné à accueillir des navires de haute mer de grande taille et un centre d'acheminement. Bolloré Africa Logistics fournit des services logistiques, notamment de transit, de dédouanement et d'entreposage, et de gestion et exploitation de terminaux portuaires et de chemins de fer. APMT exploite des terminaux à conteneurs. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence en raison de son impact limité sur le marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8747](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of COSTA Coffee by The Coca Cola Company

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Costa Coffee of the UK by The Coca Cola Company of the US. Costa Coffee operates coffee shops and hot beverage vending machines mainly in the UK, Ireland and Poland and sells packaged, roast and ground coffee and other ingredients. The Coca Cola Company owns and licenses various trademarks used to market non-alcoholic beverages, produces soft drink concentrate and syrups that it supplies to its bottlers and is responsible for the consumer marketing of beverages sold under its trademarks. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies do not sell the same products and the links between their activities are limited. The operation was examined under the

normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.9122](#). *(For more information: Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over Peggy Holdco by Macquarie and MML

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Peggy Holdco of the UK by Macquarie Group (“Macquarie”) of Australia and MML UK Partners (“MML”) of the UK. Peggy Holdco owns ParkingEye, a carpark management company active in the UK. Macquarie is a global provider of banking, financing, advisor, investment and funds management services. MML is a private equity firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given its limited impact on the market. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9225](#). *(For more information: Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears proposed establishment of two joint ventures by Autolaunch and Beijing Electric Vehicle

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the establishment of two joint ventures by Autolaunch Ltd. of Ireland and Beijing Electric Vehicle Co. Ltd. of China. The joint ventures will be active on the market for engineering services and contract manufacturing of blade electric passenger vehicles. Autolaunch is a 100% owned subsidiary of Cosma Tooling Ireland Unlimited, which is directly held by Magna International Inc., a global automotive supplier active in the areas of manufacturing operations, product development, engineering and sales. Autolaunch is mainly active in the production of tooling and related services. Beijing Electric Vehicle Co. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Beijing Automotive Group Co. Ltd. and is mainly active in the fields of vehicle system integration and matching, production and development of vehicle control systems, electric drive systems and pure electric passenger systems. The Commission concluded that the proposed creation of the two joint ventures would raise no competition concerns, because the joint ventures have no actual or foreseen activities within the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9187](#). *(For more information: Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

2019 European Capitals of Culture: Plovdiv and Matera

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *“The programmes for Plovdiv and Matera show how these cities envisage both their own future and that of Europe, whilst celebrating their extraordinary centuries-old heritage. The European Capital of Culture initiative brings people together and highlights the role of culture in building a European identity. Both cities will help ensure a long-term impact of last year’s successful European Year of Cultural Heritage, which has demonstrated how culture can transform our cities and regions for the better. I wish Plovdiv and Matera every success in the coming year.”*

Plovdiv is the first ever Bulgarian city to be chosen as European Capital of Culture. With a full programme under the motto **“Together”**, 2019 will bring new opportunities to the region and international visibility for the city. More than 300 projects have been organised in Plovdiv, as well as the South Central Region of Bulgaria, and the cities of Varna, Sofia and Veliko Tarnovo, including festivals and community-based projects, structured around themes linked to the characteristic features of Plovdiv, its history, cultural heritage, as well as the challenges facing the city. From discovering the Cyrillic alphabet through various exhibitions, to joint theatre productions with the Western Balkans and the Roma and Turkish communities, visitors will have an array of activities to participate in. The opening celebrations will take place from 11 – 13 January, with a series of indoor and outdoor events, including a music, light and dance performance on the evening of 12 January. Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will attend the official opening ceremony on 12 January.

The programme for Matera has been organised under the motto **“Open Future”**, and will have a special focus on social and cultural inclusion and collaborative innovation. Highlights include *“Ars Excavandi”*, a contemporary look at the history and culture of subterranean architecture; *“Re-reading Renaissance”*, a journey through the artistic past of Basilicata and Apulia; and *“Poetry of primes”*, an exhibition on the central role of mathematics in the work of artists throughout the ages. Matera will also stage the first open-air performance of the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* in co-operation with Teatro San Carlo, as well as 27 projects developed with local creative communities and partners from Europe. The opening celebrations will take place on 19 and 20 January and will gather 2,000 musicians from all the villages of the Basilicata region and many other parts of Europe. Commissioner **Navracsics** will attend the official opening ceremony on 19 January.

Background

Melina Mercouri, the then Greek Minister of Culture, took the initiative to start the European Capital of Culture in 1985. It has since become one of the most high-profile cultural initiatives in Europe. The cities are selected on

the basis of a cultural programme that must have a strong European dimension, promote the participation and active involvement of the city's inhabitants and contribute to the long-term development of the city and its surrounding region.

Holding the title of European Capital of Culture is also an excellent opportunity for the cities to change their image, put themselves on the world map, attract more tourists and rethink their development through culture. The title has a long-term impact, not only on culture but also in social and economic terms, both for the city and the region.

In 2018, Valletta in Malta and Leeuwarden in The Netherlands were European Capitals of Culture. Following Plovdiv and Matera in 2019, the future European Capitals of Culture will be Rijeka (Croatia) and Galway (Ireland) in 2020, Timisoara (Romania), Elefsina (Greece) and Novi Sad (Serbia, candidate country) in 2021, Esch (Luxembourg) and Kaunas (Lithuania) in 2022, and Veszprém (recommended) in Hungary in 2023.

For More Information

[Plovdiv2019](#) – European Capital of Culture

[#Plovdiv2019](#)

[Matera 2019](#) – European Capital of Culture

[#Matera2019](#)

European Capitals of Culture [factsheet](#)

European Capitals of Culture – Thirty years of achievements [brochure](#)